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ABSTRACT

This digest discusses the use of faculty mentoring programs to empower faculty and ultimately benefit the institution and improve the quality of higher education. It refers to the literature on mentoring in terms of conceptual frameworks, mentoring arenas, and roles and functions of mentors and proteges. It briefly addresses the following aspects of mentoring: (1) the value of mentoring in the higher education setting; (2) the use of mentoring to empower college faculty; (3) the use of mentoring to develop faculty leadership skills; (4) the importance of fitting any mentoring program to the specific culture and environment of a given institution; (5) recommendations for institutions (such as providing recognition to those who participate and providing support through institutional resources; and (6) the need for research to identify successful programs and examine the specific benefits of mentoring of female and minority faculty members. (Contains six references.) (DB)

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Empowering the Faculty Mentoring Redirected and Renewed

Gaye Luna and Deborah L. Cullen

The concept of quality improvement has been incorporated into higher education within the last decade. Incumbent with this concept is the empowerment of college and university faculty—to harness their unique talents and skills and promote their professional growth. For years, business and industry has applied the philosophy and principles of mentoring to attract, retain, and promote junior employees, and mentoring has improved individual and corporate performance and effectiveness.

In translating these same mentoring concepts to higher education, strategies, guidelines, and programs have been developed and implemented to empower faculty through mentoring. For example, mentoring has been known to invigorate senior faculty, to help junior professors learn the ropes, and to assist female and minority faculty members in understanding the organizational culture.

Mentoring embraces a philosophy about people and how important they are to educational institutions. *Empowering the Faculty* synthesizes the literature on mentoring in terms of conceptual frameworks, mentoring arenas, and roles and functions of mentors and proteges. It also discusses the dynamics of mentoring for empowering faculty members as leaders and the importance of mentoring women and minorities in academe. A discussion of planning mentoring and faculty mentoring models focuses on developing and empowering faculty and ultimately benefit the institution.

Why Should Academe Be Concerned with Mentoring? Not only does mentoring develop the profession; "by not mentoring, we are wasting talent. We educate, and train, but don't nurture" (Wright and Wright 1987, p. 207). The literature overwhelmingly points to benefits to the organization, the mentor, and the protege. Mentoring is useful and powerful in understanding and advancing organizational culture, providing access to informal and formal networks of communication, and offering professional stimulation to both junior and senior faculty members. Mentoring is a continuation of one's development as defined by life cycle and human development theorists in terms of life sequences or stages, personality development, and the concept and value of care. (Erikson 1963 and Levinson et al. 1978).

How Does Mentoring Empower the Faculty? Mentoring supports professional growth and renewal, which in turn empowers faculty as individuals and colleagues (Boice 1992). Teaching and research improve when junior faculty are paired with mentors, job satisfaction and organization socialization greater. Not only do proteges become empowered through the assistance of a mentor, but mentors themselves also feel renewed through the sharing of power and the advocacy of collegiality.

Can Mentoring Assist in Faculty Leadership? Experts in the field of mentoring point out that mentoring is developmental and continuous and may address a variety of faculty career needs over a period of time. Faculty can develop as leaders through the receipt of professional and institutional information; support, sponsorship, and stimulation; advice, assistance, and guidance; and feedback and direction toward goals. Faculty involved in mentoring are more likely to have opportunities to develop not only professionally (career

orientation) but also personally (psycho-social needs) over the span of their careers (Kram 1986).

Does Mentoring Involve Special Considerations? Research emphasizes the benefits of mentoring programs and the successes of those who have experienced mentoring. But mentoring must fit the culture and environment of the educational institution, and faculty must be involved in the design and implementation of strategies and plans for mentoring. Mentoring might need to address the concerns and needs of women and minorities in academe. Statistics and research studies point to these professionals' experiences in higher education as different in terms of scholarship, advising assignments, teaching loads, and service to the community, profession, and institution. As a first step, mentoring has been important in assisting new female and minority faculty members to feel comfortable with the academic environment (Maack and Passett 1994).

What Can Institutions Do? Empowering the faculty through mentoring requires careful planning so that the educational institution's needs are incorporated. Although mentoring programs have similar steps, purposes, and activities, programs need to be customized to meet the goals of the proteges, the mentors, and the community college or university. Recommendations include raising campus awareness about the importance of mentoring, establishing a mentoring program with faculty assistance and input, providing recognition to those who participate, and providing support through institutional resources. Planned mentoring programs include establishing purpose and goals, assessing organization's policies, identifying and training participants (both proteges and mentors), and evaluating and modifying the program.

What Must Be Done in the Future? Although informal mentoring programs are often found in community colleges and universities, no existing body of literature synopsizes or analyzes these programs. What works well at one educational institution is not readily known to others interested in developing mentoring programs. Planned, formalized mentoring programs are even rarer, and some of those that exist have failed to determine evaluative outcomes in terms of proteges, mentors, and institutional goals and objectives. Those interested in mentoring research need to identify those programs which have been successful and understand why. And research on the specific benefits of mentoring programs for female and minority faculty members—at both the community college and university levels— needs to be conducted.

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Empowering the Faculty: Mentoring Redirected and Renewed by Gaye Luna and Deborah L. Cullen.

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